

WET AFTERNOONS.

The following puzzles may serve to while away an autumn afternoon. A key is published with them.

I. Puuctuate the following to make sense:—"Time flies you cannot they go so fast."

II. Fill in the blanks in the following verses with words all composed of the same letters in different orders. No. 1 requires six-letter words, No. 2 eight-letter words, and No. 3 four-letter words.

1. A — sat in his — grey,
Watching the moonbeam's — play;
Thou — the weak, thou — the strong,
And earth with a — sent back the song.
2. "Off to the links," is now the cry,
For golf is man's —
Be not — nor slow,
— hit, the ball will go!
3. Come, landlord, fill the flowing —
Until the — run over;
To-day we'll — close to this —
To-morrow — to Dover.

KEY.

I. Time is here the verb, flies the noun, therefore it reads:
"Time flies! You cannot. They go too fast."

II. Missing words.

1. Sutler, ulster, lustre, rulest, lurest, rustle.
2. Idolatry, dilatory, adroitly.
3. Pots, tops, stop, spot, post.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR EDITOR,

I thought the readers of "L'Umile Pianta" might like to hear of a plan which I have found most useful during the nine years I have been teaching. I call it "The Rainy-day Drawer" (or "box" as the case may be. In this I keep several games, educational and otherwise, which I have collected from time to time. When a hopelessly wet afternoon has set in, and the children have nothing special to do, I bring from the drawer either a new game, or, by request, an old favourite. If any child has a cold and is prevented from going out, some occupation is found for him in the "Rainy-day Drawer." The only other occasion when it is used is during the children's hour after tea, if they are unable to go to their mother—as a consolation!

Its contents are kept a mystery—this adds to the excitement. Very often one only introduces the game when one notices the interest in their own play is beginning to flag. I have known the children to hail a wet afternoon with delight, so as to be able to have a favourite game from the drawer. Of course I vary its contents according to the ages of my pupils. I have found the following favourites amongst children ages five to ten:—Sprinkle pictures, painting books, cardboard models, making paper dolls, bookmarkers cut out of perforated cardboard or made with the Kindergarten paper strips, plasticine, threading beads, puzzles, elementary scientific experiments, amateur conjuring, wool balls, Kindergarten occupations. *Games*: Fishpond, the tailless donkey, ludo, dissected maps. *Cards*: Alice in Wonderland (a great favourite), birds, blocks or patience, amongst many others.

Most of the above can be got at a very small cost, and if there are a few additions made each term, the expense is not noticeable. Many of the penny toys and games are great favourites, and if one keeps ones eyes open, it is surprising how quickly and inexpensively suitable things may be

collected. Occasionally, the children help to make a game for the drawer. All unfinished work is put back to be completed on the next wet afternoon.

I am, yours sincerely,

G. M. B.

DEAR EDITOR,

As many students use Mrs. Curwen's "Child Pianist" for teaching music, I wonder if all know of the tenth and latest edition of the "Teacher's Guide." I heard of it some months since, and have found it a great improvement on previous editions—much fuller in every way.

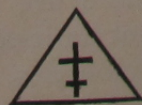
There is one point in particular I should like to call attention to, viz.: Mrs. Curwen's suggestion of teaching children to know and read 5-line staves other than the bass and treble. At first I was like some of those teachers mentioned in the book, who did not take to this idea, but feeling sure that Mrs. Curwen would not lay stress on this part of the work without good reason, I resolved to try it, and have done so with two children of seven and eight with success. They enjoy the exercises, and instead of confusion being produced, I find the unity of the great staff becomes more firmly impressed on their minds.

M. W. K.

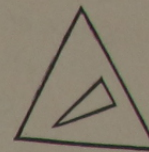
DEAR EDITOR,

In an ill-guided moment, I took up somebody's lead in a drawing discussion in the "Budget," and told some of my experiences in that line, which experiences I have been unmercifully ordered, or politely requested, to repeat in "The Plant." I expect they will be new to no one; but perhaps they may start a discussion, which is always interesting.

I was given a hint, the other day, about teaching the elements of design to small pupils, and I have been putting it into practice. I gave M. a triangle, and told her to make a design in it, using three straight lines only: the result was this, rather suggestive of a fleur-de-lys.



Next time she had a triangle again, and the use of three straight lines, which were themselves to form a figure. Here is the result, not merely so promising.



This called for a talk about balance and symmetry, and repetition and so on. Since then she has had square spaces to fill, or round ones, and very soon I shall give her one of her own designs to develop: for instance, the first might be turned into a fleur-de-lys, and others suggest other flowers, or spaces might be filled in with flat washes. I think the method ought to teach balance and composition, apart from the actual designing.

As for drawing from still life, we find the following plan answers well. After the object is very carefully drawn, the children paint in all the strongest, simplest shades, sometimes adding the half-tones, making a strong black and white study of it. Then the colour is put on in a flat wash afterwards. I think this helps them to realise the importance of light and shade. My elder pupil would go on to more detail when her drawing had reached this stage, but the ten-year-old finishes with the wash of colour, and at present she relies on Nature Note-book work to teach detail and refinement in painting.

Now I think it is somebody else's turn to make suggestions.

Yours, &c.,

LADYBIRD.